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Testimony submitted to the
Judiciary Committee
for the public hearing on March 22, 2019

In support of **SB 1085 LCO No. 6083:**
An Act Concerning the Legalization of the Retail Sale and Possession of Cannabis
and Concerning Erasure of Criminal Records in the Case of Convictions
Based on the Possession of a Small Amount of Cannabis.

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Senator Bergstein, Representative Blumenthal, and Members of the Committee,

I support **SB 1085, LCO 6083**, as referenced above. The decades-old prohibition on cannabis, a substance that has been scientifically deemed to be less harmful than tobacco or alcohol, both of which are legal and, in some cases, celebrated in our country, has not worked. With the prohibition historically rooted in racist stereotypes and outright lies, the time has come in our state, if not our country, to right the wrongs this ban has caused our citizens.

One section of this comprehensive bill I single out is Section 17 (b), lines 450-467, which allows for the erasure of criminal records for convictions based on the possession of small amounts of cannabis.

A 2013 report by the ACLU, which included an analysis of FBI crime statistics from 2010, stated "... on average, a Black person is 3.73 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than a white person, even though Blacks and whites use marijuana at similar rates."¹ In Connecticut that year, a Black person was 3.3 times more likely to be arrested than a white person.² It's but a small leap to conclude that conviction rates must therefore follow a similar pattern. We as a state cannot sit by and let this unjust practice, which has ruined so many lives for so many years, continue.

I urge you to support SB 1085.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹American Civil Liberties Union, *The War on Marijuana in Black and White: Billions of Dollars Wasted on Racially Biased Arrests*, June 2013, p. 4.

²*Ibid.*, p. 130.